

A N

Historical Address,

DELIVERED IN

KEENE, N. H.,

— ON —

JULY 4, 1876,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT,

— BY —

WILLIAM ORNE WHITE.



KEENE:

SENTINEL PRINTING COMPANY, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
1876.

A N

Historical Address,

DELIVERED IN

KEENE, N. H.,

— ON —

JULY 4, 1876.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT,

— BY —

WILLIAM ORNE WHITE.



KEENE:

SENTINEL PRINTING COMPANY, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1876.

F46

.K21E

Col. 2

Source unknown

CITY OF KEENE.

In the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six.

A RESOLUTION in relation to printing the Historical Address of
WILLIAM O. WHITE, July 4th.

Resolved by the City Councils of the City of Keene, as follows :

That the thanks of the City Government be presented to the REV-
EREND WILLIAM O. WHITE, for the address delivered by him on the
4th inst.

That a copy of the same be requested for the Press, and that two
thousand copies, in pamphlet form, be printed for the use of the cit-
izens; one copy of the same to be forwarded to Washington, in ac-
cordance with the recommendation of the President, and one copy
to the clerk of the County Courts.

CHARLES SHRIGLEY,
President Common Council.

E. FARRAR,
Mayor.

A true copy.—ATTEST :

H. S. MARTIN,
City Clerk pro tem.

a.m.p. Aug 22, 1910
Re entered 68,133

ADDRESS.

We are all an hundred years old to-day. For *this day*, at least, we identify ourselves with our country, and we know that it will not be the privilege of the youngest, any more than of the oldest among us, to lend our bodily presence at the next centennial. So there is, indeed, a significant sense in which, to-day, we are all of one age. I do not forget that Deacon John Whitman, of Bridgewater, Mass., lived to be one hundred and seven years old—but upon what conditions? His son testifies that no matter what terrific events were occurring in the world, no matter what instances of depravity were reported in private life, the most vehement expression of disapprobation which he could recall hearing the patriarch use was, “Oh strange!” Now I think it may be conceded that the Young America of Keene will hardly be willing thus rigidly to rule their spirits. We shall hardly find them bartering all their interjectional exclamations for the mild regimen of “Oh strange!” even to secure the hope of living past an hundred years.

Resigning, therefore, to the unborn the privilege of being eager and active participants in the next centennial, we stretch one hand to the shadowy forms of the past, and the other to the shadowy forms of the future, content to be, to-day, only a connecting link between the two.

The pity is that this call of Congress and the President, for some glimpse of historical research to-day, on the part of the various localities in our land, should not be more generally heeded. In any one instance, there may not be much evoked from the records of the past, to stir the sympathies of the listeners. But when we think of the country as a whole, when we consider all our cities and villages, we are reminded

of the coral reefs on the coast of Australia, a thousand miles in extent, the combined work of innumerable myriads of microscopic creatures, each one of which has performed his indispensable part in this marvellous architecture. Thus each contribution, however humble, to the history of any village in the land, is so much added to that historic reef, into which, with microscopic eyes, the investigator of future centuries will be glad to pry. The time may come when we of this generation shall be laughed at for thinking ourselves so wise. They that come after us will wish that we had been more sparing of our theories, and had been more patient in recording facts. The theories which an Egyptian astronomer held five thousand years ago, it may not greatly concern us to know, but his record of the appearance of the star Sirius, once more, after having been concealed by the sun, enables us, with one stroke of the pen, to add seventeen hundred and seventy years to the already venerable years of the third pyramid of Gizeh. So let us refresh our minds with a few of the incidents that are connected with our own story as a frontier settlement, as a village, and subsequently as a city, assuring posterity, in advance, of our thanks, should it add brighter lustre to the name of Keene than all which it has worn before.

Yet it is hard to divert our minds even for a moment, from Philadelphia, to-day.

In imagination, we are all under the shadow of Independence Hall: we hear the charge, as of yore: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." We see its avenues re-peopled with those patriots of an elder day. "How long will it all last?" is the whispered prayer in their minds, as they think of the germ of national freedom which they are patiently committing to the soil. We turn our eyes away for a moment, and, as we look again, behold their prayer answered in the bursting from the soil of the "Century Plant" of American Liberty, its petals wet with dew drops from heaven,—the oppressed from other lands, aye, even from our own borders, all clasping hands exultingly beneath its beneficent shelter!

It was through the legislation of Massachusetts, in July 1732, that the proprietors of the Upper Ashuelot, (for thus

the tract was designated,) derived their rights. On June 26th, 1734, (one hundred and nineteen years before the observance of the town's centennial in 1853, which celebration commemorated, strictly, only the one hundredth anniversary of its charter under its present name,) we see these proprietors meeting in Concord, Mass., "at the house of Mr. Jonathan Hall, inn-holder." In the following September, a very few of these proprietors reach the unfrequented wilderness of their choice, by the way of Northfield, Mass., its nearest civilized neighbor. In the year 1740, they find themselves, upon the adjustment of the disputed boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, "excluded from the province of the Massachusetts Bay, to which they alwaies supposed themselves to belong," and vainly beseeching the powers that be, that "they may be annexed to the said Massachusetts Province."

It would be a great piece of historic treason, to imagine our beautiful valley, as being first settled only a hundred years before the commemoration in 1853, for it was in fact as early as the year 1736 that Main street enlarged its borders, the following vote being then passed: "Forasmuch as the Town Street is judged to be too narrow conveniently to accomodate the Proprietors, That every Proprietor whose Lotts ly on the West side of the street, that will leave out of his Lott at the front, or next adjoining to sd street, four rods in depth, the whole bredth of their respective Lotts, to accomodate the sd street, shall have it made up in quantity in the Rear, or other end of their Lotts." What would these *wide-hearted* men have said of some of the streets laid out a century later by their successors?

There soon steps upon the scene a helpful man indeed, "the worthy Mr. Jacob Bacon," as he is designated; the Clerk and Treasurer of the Proprietors three months before May 1st, 1738, when he "was chosen by every vote," as a suitable person to settle in the ministry of this place.

In his letter of acceptance, he says "But, with this, I desire your candor in attending upon my administrations, considering yt I am but a man Liable to ye Like passions, temptations, failings and imperfection with other men, and indeed, more in ye way of *Satan's* malice, than you or any else are.

but those who are engaged in ye like cause against *his* publick interest, as ye ministers of Christ are." It is a firm, round hand that "worthy" Mr. Bacon writes, a model for a Scribe. No wonder that he remained Clerk of the Proprietors, as long as he remained their pastor. He appears to have continued with them until 1747, nine years after his settlement, when they were all on the eve of abandoning the place to the Indians. He was one of a class numbering thirty-four, who graduated at Harvard College in 1731. Among the twelve ministers who belonged to the class, I notice the name of my mother's great-grandfather, Rev. John Sparhawk of Salem, Mass. How different their lot! The "First Church" in Salem, had been gathered more than a century before! It is not hard to imagine Jacob Bacon as writing to his Salem classmate concerning his "perils by heathen," and "perils in the wilderness." "Come over into Macedonia, and help us, Oh, John Sparhawk." may he not have written?

And after the discovery in 1745, of the lifeless body of Deacon Josiah Fisher, near where the late Mr. Charles Lamson's bark-house is, we may *imagine* him writing thus: "Ah, Sparhawk, little can you dream what a sorrow has befallen us here! My right-hand man, Deacon Josiah Fisher, is gone! You will scarce believe me, when I tell you *how*. His lifeless form was found on the road over which he was taking his cow to pasture, and I shudder to tell you that it had been also scalped! There lay, now silent and cold, that face which had so often beamed upon us from the Sanctuary. It was but yesterday that he had said: "Let us take courage! Having put our hand to the plough, let us not look back." "And now the Lord hath gathered him, as ripened wheat, into his garner."

And again, hear him addressing his classmate, the following year, just after the tragedy, which culminated in the slaughter of others of his flock. "John Sparhawk, I can say with Jeremy: 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!' Again hath the Indian enemy been let loose, like Satan, seeking whom he may devour. He stealthily pursued good mistress McKenny, stabbing her in the back, as she, unconscious soul, was wearily

stepping toward her barn, to milk her cow. And John Bullard, moreover, hath been fatally shot. Running from his barn, he was nigh to grasp the gate of the fort, when the cruel foe took deadly aim at his back, and he gave up the ghost. But Ephraim Dorman hath received from the Lord the mantle of Samson, for he prevailed marvellously in a fierce wrestle with a stalwart savage, and went off victorious." Let me add that whenever these imaginary letters actually come into my hands, they shall surely find their way into the archives of Keene! As "worthy" Jacob Bacon, walked from his church, near where the Robinson farmhouse now stands, past the fort, near where that courtly gentleman, the late Dr. Charles G. Adams, so long resided—that luckless fort, so succorless for John Bullard,—and as he glanced across the road to the McKenny house on the sight of Mr. E. C. Thayer's mansion,—as he walked over such a road, how vividly the imagery of the Old Testament must have occurred to him! With the Psalmist, he must have said, "My soul is among lions," and he must have also rejoiced that *he* too could say to Jehovah, "Thou hast known my soul in adversities."

How all this stern participation in the hardships of his flock, must have endeared this picturesque valley to him only the more. And when, just after all the colonists had forsaken the settlement, he learned that scarce anything was left behind them by the Indians, but smoking ruins; even the church turned to ashes, with its "pulpit, and table and Deacon's seat, built all completely workmanlike," his heart must have sunk within him.

Nor could his subsequent ministry in Plymouth, Mass., terminating just a hundred years ago, and lasting twenty-seven years, have ever weaned him wholly from the exciting frontier life in which he was evidently so practical a helper. He died in Rowley, Mass., in 1787, at the age of eighty-one, having preached a while after leaving Plymouth, in what is now the town of Carver.

To his latest days, we can imagine how young and old gathered around him to hear him describe the discovery of Mark Ferry, the hermit, who in his terror of the Indians, had crawled from his cave near the river-bank into the boughs of an over-

hanging tree; and to listen to his recital of the picturesque career of Nathan Blake, who, resisting an impulse secretly to stone his captor to death, was advanced to a vacant chieftainship among the Canadian Indians, gained at times the mastery over them in athletic sports, and was at length released after two years' captivity, surviving until the year 1811, and falling but seven months short of being a centenarian. A lad once told me in a similar case, that a man had become "almost a centurion!" Mr. Nathan Blake, both among Indians and white men, had certainly long enjoyed the honor of being a sort of centurion, even if he were not quite a centenarian.

After the three or four years' vacation granted to the Upper Ashuelot settlers by the plots of their Indian enemies, we find these colonists returning in 1750 and 1751, and wearing in 1753 the corporate name of Keene, a name which the late Hon. Salmon Hale, in his terse, but invaluable "Annals," conjectures to have been borrowed by Governor Wentworth from Sir Benjamin Keene, who at about this time, was "Minister from England to Spain."

The late Rev. Aaron Hall writes: "The inhabitants of Swanzey and Keene, after they returned from their dispersion on account of the wars, desirous of having the gospel preached among them, however they were few in number; accordingly the two towns covenanted together to hire preaching in connection." Rev. John L. Sibley, the indefatigable librarian of Harvard College, a rare and accurate antiquarian, writes me that on April 21, 1753, the churches of Keene and Swanzey met at the school house in Swanzey, and united in installing Rev. Ezra Carpenter, who had at a previous time been the minister of Hull for twenty-five years. He was re-installed, (and this re-installing, Rev. Aaron Hall alludes to) Oct. 4, 1753, when the two towns agreed to be one religious society, bearing the expenses equally for three years. Afterwards the union was continued by annual assessments till 1760, when Keene voted not to join with the people of Swanzey in maintaining the worship of God; the minister having the choice of places, preferred Swanzey. The tradition, adds Mr. Sibley, is, "that he was dismissed from Swanzey about 1765 (though another authority says 1769) at his own request, and the eccle-

siastical council had but just left the meeting house when a tornado struck it and turned it one-quarter round, so that it faced the East instead of the South."

What omen was attached to this right-about-face movement from the skies, we do not learn. Mr. Carpenter died at Walpole, Aug. 26, 1785. When, in 1753, Rev. Ezra Carpenter began to preach here, a rude fabric had been erected that season, where Mr. Reuben Stewart's house now stands, but in December the people voted to build a meeting house forty-five feet long and thirty-five wide, several rods West of Mr. Henry Colony's present residence on West street. In January it appears to have been removed to a spot near where the Soldiers' Monument now stands. The removal appears to have been made "in consideration of the unfitness of the ground, and the exposedness to fire, and to the enemy, in case of war." The "worthy" Mr. Clement Sumner was ordained as minister of Keene, June 11, 1761, remaining their pastor for eleven years. Rev. Dr. Barstow, in his "Half-century Sermon" says that "he was a graduate of Yale College in 1758, and that in 1772, in consequence of difficulties, he was dismissed at his own request, by an ecclesiastical council."

On the 18th of February, 1778, Rev. Aaron Hall, a graduate of Yale College in 1772, entered upon his thirty-six years' ministry of peace and joy, going in and out among his people like a brother beloved. The inhabitants have scarcely been anchored twenty-one years after their return, when the cloud of war is again seen heavily rising, this time over the whole country. From the Provincial papers published by the New Hampshire Historical Society, it appears that the population of Keene in 1775 was but 756, of whom 31 out of the 171 males between 16 and 50 years of age, were in the army. It is gratifying to notice that *no* "negroes or slaves for life" are reported from Keene, while Exeter reports 36, and Somersworth, with a population of but 965, reports 30, and Winchester and Walpole 10 each, and even Dublin, 1. The town of Surry, according to the Provincial papers, reports seven "parsons" as "gone in the army," a liberal proportion of the cloth, one would think, for a population of 215, and suggesting the idea that the town might be willing to spare a few of them. But the enigma is

solved when we find Lancaster, Hawke, and Boscawen all sending their *parsons*, and no persons.

The Adjutant-General's Reports indicate that as early as 1775, Col. Josiah Willard, of Keene, was at the head of a regiment marching to Crown Point. William Ellis appears as Captain, and Benjamin Ellis, as 2d Lieutenant of the Third N. H. Regiment, in 1777, both of Keene.

It is a significant fact that the one hundred and thirty-three names which the State papers report as signing the agreement to "oppose with arms the hostile proceedings of the British fleet and armies," reads as if it were copied from our present voting lists. We find ourselves in a wilderness of Blakes and Metcalfs, and Ellises and Crossfields and Nimses and Wheelers and Wilders and Briggses, &c., while the smaller list of thirteen who refused to sign, has scarcely a representative among us. Captain Eliphalet Briggs, though dying in Keene, of small pox, at the age of forty-one, in 1776, had already been in the army, and had been sent delegate from Keene, on August 2d of that year, to consult at Walpole with delegates from other towns, concerning the public safety. Our local antiquarian, (William S. Briggs, Esq.,) his great grandson, tells me that he well remembers "Eliakim Nims" ("Captain," all called him) as he went the round of the streets, a ready rhymer. Seated, like a Turk, on the table, he would tell the story of Bunker Hill over and over again, to the charmed ears of the children, his voice waxing pathetic, as these words came slowly forth: "But alas, our ammunition failed," and deepening in impressiveness as he added, "When we went into battle, *there* stood my brother, close at my side, but after the firing began, my brother was to be seen nevermore." This Eliakim Nims once resided in the cottage formerly occupied by Mr. Lucien B. Page. And in this connection it may be interesting to know, that there is a well-supported tradition, that Mr. Luther Nurse's barn, on Beech Hill, was "raised" by one Wheeler, on the very day of the battle of Bunker Hill. There, then, towering far above us, is our monument of that battle. "Zach Tufts," known by some persons as Morgan Tufts, because he was one of Morgan's Riflemen, is well remembered still; a man, one blow from whose

brawny fist, was long a terror to any interloper who dared to play any mischievous pranks when the removal of a building was going on. Ebenezer Carpenter, J. P. Blake and others, are also recalled. *Mrs. Betsey Houghton—now within less than ten years of the full century of years to which her mother, Mrs. John Leonard, attained, twenty-one years ago—graphically recalls Capt. John Houghton, her husband's father, as he was wont to tell of his march to Bennington, and the big cheese at one farm house on the road, which he was fired with an ambition to discuss, but which held siege, both against love and money, and yielded only when he made signal for some of his soldiers to approach. Nathaniel Kingsbury and Daniel Kingsbury and Aaron Wilson, were all Revolutionary soldiers: and they all have descendants still among us. Silas Perry, I met in 1851, and followed him to the grave in 1852. He lived to the age of 89. He came to Keene at about the age of 30, having enlisted in the war from Westminster, Mass. He was wont sadly to recount, how it fell to his lot to be one of the guard at the execution of Major Andre. Once more the name of "Bacon," gleams before us, as we find that the Revolutionary lieutenant, Oliver Bacon of Jaffrey, by the testimony of our fellow citizen, Gen. James Wilson, who happily helped him out of a law suit, was a son of our Rev. Jacob Bacon, the well-beloved pioneer pastor of Upper Ashuelot.

The exploit at the battle of Bennington, resulting in the capture, by Josiah Richardson and Joshua Durant, of three Hessians, is familiar to those who have studied Hale's †Annals as faithfully as they should. The most vivid incident, however, connected with our part in the Revolutionary war, is reported in the same work, where Captain Dorman calls on Captain Isaac Wyman, giving him the news from Concord, in April '75, and adding, "What shall be done?" The inhabitants meet, by Captain Wyman's direction, "on the green;" Capt. Wy-

*Mr. Abel Blake vividly recalls Lieut. Samuel Heaton, who lived on Marlboro' street, in the house below Mr. Cole's residence.

†The annalist himself died November 19, 1866, in his 80th year, leaving two children, Hon. Geo. S. Hale, a successful and greatly trusted advocate, in Boston, and Mrs. Sarah, widow of the late Hon. Harry Hibbard, M. C., of Bath, New Hampshire.

man is chosen leader, and "though far advanced in years, cheerfully consents to go." Thirty volunteers are forthcoming. At sunrise next day, they meet, too early to be cheered by the good word from Gen. Bellows and others of Walpole, "Keene has shown a noble spirit," as they hasten on in the track of the Keene party.

But of the hardships endured by the women and children who were left at home at the time of the Revolution, we, at this day, can form little conception. A lady once pointed me to the spot, in Winchester, which was the scene of her grandmother's hardships. Her mother had heard from her the story full often: "Your father," she would say, "left his hoe in the potato hill, and was off for battle at once upon the summons." "But what shall we do, the little children and I, who are left behind, when winter threatens?" "Kill the cow, and have it salted down, when cold weather begins." But when, scarce a month afterwards, the cow was found dead on the edge of the forest, the poor woman's heart was broken, and as she sounded her lament in the ears of a friendly neighbor, he replied, as they walked through the woods to the spot where he buried the cow, "It's no use, Ma'am, crying for spilt milk." This loser of the cow was the great-grandmother of a much respected resident of this place, Mrs. Farnum F. Lane.

"Do you remember about the Revolutionary war?" I said to the late Mrs. Dorcas Rice, of Jaffrey, three years since, she then being almost one hundred and four years old. "I remember it," she replied, "because mother took on so bad when father went away to the war." Thus, we find a child's remembrance of a mother's tears over her sacrifice to her country, lasting well nigh an hundred years!

When you are walking, for hours together, you know how it feels, after climbing some craggy hill, or descending some sharp ravine, to come out upon a long, dull, level stretch of country, even although the fields on either side be fertile, and the road good. There is little to break the uniformity of the view. And yet, travel over the level you must, if you would get to your journey's end. So it is with me, friends: be patient, we are coming out upon the level of our "historical

sketch," but we must move forward upon it, or else we shall *never* get through with the century. But we have one comfort. We may get over the ground a little faster, even as we can take longer strides over the plains, than over the hill-tops.

The embittered feelings engendered by the war did not soon die away, for in June, 1783, we find the town unanimously instructing their representative, Daniel Kingsbury, "to use his influence that all who have absented themselves from any of the United States, and joined with, or put themselves under, the protection of the enemies of the United States, be utterly debarred from residing within this State." And in 1784, one Elijah Williams, who, as early as 1773, had been compelled to stop issuing writs in the name of George the 3d, (by his angry fellow-townsmen) is seized and threatened with running a gauntlet of black beech rods: and there is a violent riot occasioned by this attempt to maltreat him. The Court in Charlestown, before which he appeared, next day, allowed him to transact his needful business, and then peaceably to leave the State.

In 1788, Rev. Aaron Hall sits, as the delegate from Keene, in the Convention at Exeter, called for the discussion of the proceedings of the Convention which framed the United States Constitution, and his oration, delivered in Keene, on June 30, on which day Keene celebrated its ratification, is advertised in the *New Hampshire Recorder*. The same journal, upon Oct. 14, 1788, states that the dedication of the new meeting house in this town, will be on Wednesday, the 29th, when a sermon, suitable to the occasion, will be delivered by Rev. Aaron Hall. This church still stands, although twice remodelled.

We also find that some customs could be abandoned in the eighteenth, as well as in the nineteenth century, when we read that "Isaac Wyman, begs leave to inform the public, that he shall not in future vend any liquors, but would be glad to serve travellers with boarding and lodging, and the best of horse-keeping." To all the items in this last clause, Rev. Dr. Barstow is understood, (as he at length occupied this very house) to have been faithful, horse-keeping included, although his guests may have been chiefly of a clerical cast. Did Isaac "feel it in his bones" that the soul of this staunch friend of Temperance

was marching on towards this planet, and so conclude thus early to "set his house * in order" for him?

This *New Hampshire Recorder*, to which allusion has just been made, first appeared in 1787, being printed by James D. Griffith. The column nowadays headed "Poetry," was denominated by "Griffith" "The Parnassian Packet," seeming by its designation to challenge a lofty flight, on the part of Pegasus. Of this challenge he seems to have availed himself in these stanzas, which I extract from a contribution to the "Packet" about nine years before the death of Washington, to whose virtues it refers :

" And when he drops this earthly crown,
He's one in Heaven of high renown,
He's deified, exalt him high,
He's next unto the Trinity.
My language fails to tell his worth,
Unless in Heaven, he is the fourth,
This tribute due to Washington,
Exalt him, every mother's son!"

In the whimsical interrogatory of our own day :—"How's that for high?" In the "Parnassian Packet" the Father of his Country is evidently made to rank the angel Gabriel. Literature appears also not to have been neglected by Mr. Griffith, for we find (printed upside down to attract attention) this advertisement : "That Ruby of inestimable value, The æconomy of human life, translated from an Indian manuscript, written by an ancient Brahmin, will be put to press within fifteen days. James D. Griffith." The same editor discloses the prince of sextons, in furnishing the obituary of one of that guild in Derbyshire, who, during his seventy years of service, according to his own statement, had "buried the parish twice over." An illustration of some of the difficulties which beset the craft in those days, is afforded in the following paragraph from the same sheet : "As paper of the usual size could not be obtained at the paper mill for this day's paper, our customers will excuse the present size."

On March 11th, 1799, the first number of the *New Hampshire Sentinel* appears, Mr. John Prentiss, then twenty-one

* It was in this house that the Trustees of Dartmouth College held their first meeting.

years of age, being its editor, a post which he honorably held for about forty-nine years, surviving twenty-five years after his retirement. "Payments," we read, "must be made quarterly, to enable the editor to satisfy the demands of the paper-maker, the boarding-house, and various other necessary creditors. Wood, butter, cheese, grain, and almost every article used in a family, will be as acceptable as the cash, if brought in season. The editor promises to use every customer well that will use him well." We find this advertisement: "Wanted immediately: A Post-rider to circulate this paper in the towns of Surry, Alstead, Marlow, Washington, Stoddard, Sullivan, Packersfield, Hancock, Dublin, &c. A steady, active person may find his account in immediately commencing this work."

And now, as men curiously scan the annual rings in some venerable and prostrate oak, let us glance at some of these scars of time, as they give us occasional glimpses into our local history, and into what was going on in the minds of our people. How tame must sidewalk and post-office discussions have been in a community, which, in 1799, gave to Governor Gilman one hundred and seven votes, while the opposition rallied only two "scattering" votes! But over the sea, for a score of years, matter was daily brewing for agitation, in our New England villages. No wonder that the *Sentinel* revelled chiefly in the publication of foreign news. Sixteen years before the exile to Elba, we read, under date of March 18th, 1799: "Confirmation of the death of Bonaparte. Seven expresses from Egypt, report Bonaparte and a number of French officers assassinated." Nine days afterwards, the same paper says: "Our readers will see that after report upon report, and confirmation upon confirmation, of the death of this mighty man, he still lives." We infer that once more there was suspense upon this subject, for in the issue of August 4, 1799, we read, "of Bonaparte we hear nothing, whether he is dead or alive." But, Mr. Editor, you *will* hear from him, and he will live to go crashing through your columns of foreign intelligence for more than twenty years!

A classic writer says, "There lived brave men before the time of Agamemnon;" so, lest we should think that the

Keenites had not begun, in days unblessed with all our modern effulgence, to get at books, let us notice this advertisement under date of May 4, 1799: "The Proprietors of the Social Library Society are requested to attend punctually to their annual meeting, on Monday next, at the Court House, at 2 p. m. Aaron Hall, Librarian."

And see, this same year, to what flights of patriotism our neighboring town of Swanzev rises, on her Fourth of July celebration, seventy-seven years ago. Here are two of the toasts: "The ever-memorable Fourth of July; may it be celebrated with tokens of joy and sentiments of gratitude, as the birthday of American Independence, until time shall be no more." "The illustrious Washington; may his life be prolonged, and his sword abide in strength; may fresh gems be added to his crown of glory, and he have a name better than that of sons and daughters!" Ah, Swanzev, Westmoreland, Keene, Walpole and Surry, each in your own borders, rejoice and be glad while you may, exalt your great leader and pray for his lengthened life while you can. It is the last Fourth of July on which you will. The great patriot's life goes out with the ebbing tide of the eighteenth century, in the waning days of December. What a night it was in Keene, when men learned that all was over! Listen: "Immediately on receiving the afflicting tidings in this town, on Thursday evening, the citizens caused the bell to be tolled; the doleful knell was heard until morning. Yesterday, at twelve o'clock, the American flag was hoisted in mourning and the bell again tolled until two." But we may toll the bells with a deeper, heavier knell, if the day ever comes, when the pure, unbribed patriotism of men like Washington, exists only as a shadowy tradition of a former age!

On the following twenty-second of February, a more elaborate observance of the occasion took place, reproduced in Mr. Hale's Annals.

What a man "leaves," when he dies, is still sometimes a topic of discussion in the community. But in 1802, we find the record, in the *Sentinel*, of the death of a patriarch whose accumulated treasures are recorded, although somewhat of a different character from any California "Bonanza." At Al-

stead, Mr. Joseph Hatch, aged 84, "left one hundred and twenty grand and great grand-children." How closely bound together the scanty villagers were in that early day, is affectingly shown from the following incident: For what means, in August 1803, this procession of five hundred people as they move toward the burying-ground? Two little sisters, Roxana and Mary Wright, mistaking the floating moss in the Ashuelot River for solid earth, were swept away by the current, and Mr. and Mrs. Phineas Wright find that the whole village are mourners with them.

A suggestive commentary upon legislation, is afforded thus early, as we read among the chronicles of 1803, the appeal of a Mr. Samuel Ewalt to his constituents in another State, that inasmuch as he has fallen from his horse, and is rendered *incapable of business*, he thinks that he is *just* the man for them to send to the Legislature! And why, friends and neighbors, is illness still found among us, and why do the Doctors still linger within our borders, when, even seventy-three years ago, so priceless a discovery had been made as that of "Dr. Jonathan Moore's Essence of Life," which we are assured "is good in almost every case of disease, and will be the means of snatching thousands from the jaws of death. Whooping cough cured in a week." "Some persons," we are informed, "will bear double the dose that others will," a statement which has just enough of a tinge of mystery and horror, to make the remedy more fascinating.

In 1808, the following vote in town meeting gives us a glimpse into the existing relations at that period between church and State: "Voted, to grant fifteen dollars to purchase velvet to cover the pulpit cushion." Under date of February 17, 1810, we read of the beginning of Dr. Amos Twitchell's forty years' career as a renowned surgeon and physician, in Keene, through the following advertisement: "Dr. Amos Twitchell has removed from Marlboro' to Keene, and has taken a room at the house of Albe Cady, Esq., where he will punctually attend all commands in the line of his profession." What this eminent man did while he lived, we all know. But now for a tale to match what we hear of the marvels wrought beyond the sea, by the relics of the Saints! A worthy matron once

said to me, upon her recovery: "I suppose they had doubts about my getting up, and I know I had doubts, myself. Well, they kept urging me to send for a Doctor, and at last I almost gave in to them. But just then, as I fixed my eyes on the likeness of Dr. Twitchell, all that he had said to me about my being no case for medicine and Doctors, came back to my mind. So, as I set my eyes firm on the picture, I got strength to say 'No.' And finally, I may say, sir, that it was Dr. Twitchell's *picture* that cured me."

In 1813, on June 7th, it appears that hailstones fell, one inch and a quarter in diameter, in Keene, and that on the next morning the ground was covered with them to the depth of three inches. In the procession that year, upon the fourth of July, we find that there were forty boys, each with a portrait of Washington suspended round his neck.

On May 28, 1814, Rev. Aaron Hall writes to the town: "Sensible of my age, and often infirmities of body, it is my earnest desire to have a colleague settled to help me in the work of the Gospel ministry, provided it can be a voluntary thing with church and town, and for the mutual harmony and peace of both." In this connection, how touching is the record which not long afterwards follows:

"September 23, 1814. Voted, To give to the widow of the late Rev. Aaron Hall, all the minister tax from the time of his decease" (which occurred on August 12) "till March next."

As we shall soon see, the passing away, at the age of sixty-two, of this genial pastor, was a signal for contentions hitherto unknown among the people. Hon. Salma Hale testifies that "he was much beloved;" Rev. Dr. Barstow says that "he was universally respected."

But before these graver contentions began, the following town vote indicates that there were two sides also upon lesser questions. What would we not all give to be present and hear every word of the discussion which led to the following vote:

"December 8, 1815. Voted, *not* to suffer a stove put in the meeting house, provided it *could* be done without any expense to the town."

This vote makes only more probable, what is attested as a positive occurrence, that a leading man in the parish found the air so insupportable, (at a subsequent period) upon the Sunday after a stove had been introduced into the building, that he walked out of the church in hot rage, when a bystander, upon careful examination, discovered that whatever *internal fire* had existed that morning, it was *certainly not in the stove!*

In accepting a call to preside over the town, Mr. David Oliphant writes thus from Andover, March 28, 1815: "It is a pleasing circumstance that amidst the tumults and convulsions, which, for a few years past, have shaken the political world to its centre, the Kingdom of the Redeemer has been growing in strength, and gradually advancing to its summit of predicted glory." Alas, he little knew what tumults and convulsions would so soon centre around the Zion to which he had come. Hon. S. Hale simply records the fact of his ordination upon May 24, 1815, and there his "Annals" stop.

On April 24, 1817, when scarce two years of his ministry had expired, we find the town summoned to vote upon the following article: "To see if the town will vote to dismiss the Rev. David Oliphant."

In the course of a communication from a Committee of the First Church to the town, dated May 1, 1817, these words occur: "Does not conscience advise you to refrain from this man, and let him alone, lest haply ye be found to fight even against God!"

Upon December 1, 1817, Rev. Mr. Oliphant writes, "While you retain your present feelings towards me, I can neither enjoy peace nor happiness among you, nor overcome your prejudices so as to be useful." Thereupon, not long afterwards, the relation is dissolved by aid of a council. An inspection of the church records vindicates Dr. Barstow's statement in his Half-century Sermon, that "there was not a union of the people in the settlement of Mr. Oliphant, and a remonstrance against it was presented by the minority." Moreover, Mr. Oliphant, when addressing us all at the dinner upon our Centennial Anniversary, in 1853, under the tent where Mr. George W. Ball's dwelling now stands, on Main street, said in a

graceful and cheerful way, that when he came here he was a very young man, and that doubtless he should act differently in some respects, were he to begin over again. His personal character was always regarded as unblemished. He was soon afterwards, for sixteen years, pastor of a church in Upper Beverly, Mass., and subsequently settled in Maine. He died in 1872.

Rev. Zedekiah Smith Barstow, was the last minister settled by the *town*. He was ordained on July 1, 1818. In accepting the call, he says, "To whom shall an inexperienced adventurer on life's troubled and tremulous ocean look for counsel and direction? The ocean is tempestuous, while the voyage for eternity is hazardous beyond comprehension!" When the "adventurer" had completed his fifty-five years' residence among us, his style had long before become more compact and vigorous. In 1824, six years afterwards, the "Keene Congregational Society," known more familiarly as "Unitarian," was organized, being chiefly composed of seceders from the First Congregational Society. We might infer that a division of theological sentiment, so marked as was developed during Rev. Mr. Oliphant's ministry, would not be quickly harmonized. Circumstances minutely recorded in pamphlets printed at the time, led to the withdrawal of the dissentients, to whom, in 1823, the church is voted for five Sundays, and in 1826 for thirteen, and in 1827 for seventeen Sundays. But in 1828 the First Congregational Society secures the full use of the building, upon certain conditions, the chief of which consist in paying seven hundred and fifty dollars, to the seceders, and agreeing to remove the church edifice to the rear, from the common, and thus securing effectually the bounds of Central square, as they now are.

As an efficient member of the School Committee for many years, as a life-long advocate of Temperance, as an indefatigable trustee of Dartmouth College, Dr. Barstow is remembered; and especially as a friend and neighbor whose sympathies widened and deepened as his years rolled on. He died March 1st, 1873, aged 82, having for upwards of forty years retained the sole charge of his Society. Upon the fiftieth anniversary of his settlement, there was a dinner in his honor

at the town hall, subsequently to the delivery of his appropriate historical discourse in the church.*

We might gladly follow the fortunes of this church, since, and the fortunes of the various churches in our city, six of which have edifices of their own wherein to worship. But we may suppose them to be competent to make their own records; at any rate, the time will not permit us to pursue the thread of our local ecclesiastical history further than it is identified with the town as a corporation.

Keene was not slumbering in years gone by, quite so much as the youth of to-day may imagine. So early as October 6, 1819, upon the *second* anniversary of the Cheshire Agricultural Society, three hundred and fifty-six dollars were paid out in premiums.

In Faulkner & Colony's office, whose woollen mill, founded by another generation of the same name, has so long given employment beneficial to so many people, may be seen a piece of the first water-wheel which was set up near that spot in 1776, by Eliphalet Briggs.

In 1814, the proprietors of the New Hampshire Glass Company are asked to meet at Salem Sumner's Tavern, by John Elliot, clerk. Their factory was on the common, at the upper part of Washington street. Twenty-five years ago its evening lights gleaming through the windows and crannies of the old building, still blazed upon the outer darkness.

In 1817, Justus Perry advertises "a complete assortment of glass bottles at the Flint Glass Factory, in Keene, and at much lower prices than the Hartford bottles." His stone building was on Marlboro' street. About the year 1800, Abijah Wilder advertises that he has patented a new and useful improvement in sleigh-runners, and in 1813 "A. & A. Wilder offer patent wheel-heads at twelve dollars a dozen." These were made, it appears, in the old wooden store-house, near Faulkner & Colony's saw-mill. The tan-yard on Main street is an evidence that this industry is not a thing of yesterday

* Seven weeks afterwards, (on August 19, 1868) occurred the Golden Wedding of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Barstow, when numerous guests assembled at his homestead, — the old Wyman Tavern already referred to. We may here add that the North room of this mansion, witnessed the consultation, in 1775, (the evening previous to the march) of the company which, under Capt. Isaac Wyman, set off for Lexington, from "the green" in front of this building.

among us, being established by that man of enterprise, the late William Lamson, who died between forty and fifty years since. It is now a quarter of a century since our first steam-planing mill was established. And if at an early period there was not so much recreation afforded by the spectacle of the drill of fire companies, the announcement, in 1815, by Isaac Parker, captain, that "the Keene Light Infantry meet for practice," indicates that some sort of drill was going on here. It was as the commander of this company, that General James Wilson delivered the fourth of July oration more than forty years since, standing, as he tells me, in the pulpit of the old church, in his military equipments.

It may surprise some of us to read an advertisement so early as August 27, 1835, of the "Keene Railroad Company." Salmon Hale, Samuel Dinsmoor, Justus Perry, Phineas Handerson and John A. Fuller being "Commissioners." The stockholders make choice of seven directors. It is stated that "the road is expected to strike the Massachusetts Line in the direction of Lowell or Worcester." How different an aspect, already, has the Cheshire, actually completed thirteen years after that period, together with the Ashuelot Railroad, not long afterwards, given to Keene? And when we place by the side of this railroad gift, secured for us at so great a sacrifice on the part of its projectors, our * Goose Pond water, which the people love so well that they feel loth to coax it to find *any* way *out* of town if it will only *come in*, we may feel that with the addition of gas and the telegraph, we of the nineteenth century, can, on the whole, as regards the material comforts of life, keep rather *more* than abreast of our fathers. And yet it did not cost these men as much to travel fifty years ago, as we might now suppose. Under date of July 26, 1825, we read these words, "Seats may now be had from Walpole to Saratoga for the trifling sum of one dollar and fifty cents." In 1834, appears the announcement, "The North Star Line of Coaches will take passengers from Keene to Boston for \$2.50, and to Lowell by the same price." "By taking this line," it is added, "you are but twelve hours on the way

*The first report made by any town committee on the subject of "Water," bears date April 14, 1860.

from Boston to Keene. Try it!" Three years earlier, in 1831, appears this inviting programme, "Connecticut River Valley Steamboat Company. Leave Bellows Falls, Walpole, Westmoreland, for Hartford every Monday; Putney, Chesterfield, Brattleboro, Vernon, and Hinsdale every Tuesday; Northfield and Gill every Wednesday. Return Boats leave every Monday."

In 1840, appears a notice of the annual meeting of the "Keene Thief Detecting Association." When it was formed, and how long it lasted, we do not know. It is, at all events, plain that Keene has not always been slumbering as regards its great moral interests.

Look at the subject of Temperance. Let us abundantly rejoice at the existence of a "Reform Club," organized in our city during this centennial year, and numbering more than twenty-five hundred, strong, which has aroused us from our transient lethargy. Rev. Dr. Barstow used to say that when he came hither in 1818, he found the custom existing, of providing "spirit" at funerals, for the "bearers," and that he steadfastly resisted it. Under the date of 1820, the Town Records contain this vote: "In order to remove a principal cause of pauperism, Voted, that the Selectmen be requested to see that the laws relating to licensed and unlicensed houses be strictly enforced, and to take such other measures for the suppression of intemperance, as to them may seem advisable."

In 1829, the "New Hampshire State Temperance Society" was formed. The late Hon. Thomas M. Edwards was chosen vice president of this Society in 1835. In 1831 we find in Keene, the "Society for the promotion of Temperance," with Dr. Amos Twitchell for president, and * Rev. T. R. Sullivan secretary. In 1836 we perceive a notice of the meeting of the "Young People's Association for the Promotion of Temperance."

Upon October 16th, 1844, the "Keene Total Abstinence Association" is formed, with *six hundred* signers, Hon. Salma Hale, president. This Society continued its existence more

* At the centennial dinner Rev. Dr. Barstow alluded to Mr. S. as "The distinguished Thomas Russell Sullivan. He died near Boston, in December, 1862, aged 63. While in Keene he edited *The Liberal Preacher*."

than ten years. The "Cheshire County Washington Total Abstinence Society," of which the late Dr. Amos Twitchell was president, held meetings until within about ten years, and has never been formally dissolved. From 1852 to 1855, there were numerous lectures upon this subject delivered among us; but after the enactment of the desired *law*, there was too great a disposition to lean too heavily upon their new ally. Yet the "Sons of Temperance," the "Good Templars," the "Keene Temperance League" and the "Keene Temperance Alliance," have been sending forth gleams of light, at intervals, into the moral wilderness of Intemperance.

On March 15, 1848, some eight years before the enactment of a prohibitory law, a ballot was taken in town meeting upon this question: "Is it expedient that a law be enacted by the 'General Court,' prohibiting the sale of wine or other spirituous liquors, except for chemical, medicinal, or mechanical purposes?" The Town Records show that the vote stood — yeas 183, nays 95.

In 1764, it appears from Hale's *Annals*, that the town voted six pounds sterling to defray the charges of a school, and in 1766, it is "voted that the security for the money given to the town by Captain Nathaniel Fairbanks, deceased, the interest of which was for the use of a school in this town, be delivered to the care of the town treasurer, and his successors in office for the time being." Judge Daniel Newcomb is credited by Josiah P. Cooke, Esq., in Hale's *Annals*, with having founded a private school about 1793, mainly at his own expense; and as the best friend of "good learning" that the town had. "In 1821 the Town Records state that it is voted that the town will, at their annual meeting, in each year, choose five or more suitable persons to constitute a committee of examination, whose duty it shall be to examine those persons who shall offer themselves as instructors of the public schools within the town; and in 1823, it is voted that Zedekiah S. Barstow, Aaron Appleton, John Elliot, John Prentiss and Thomas M. Edwards, be a committee to examine teachers, agreeably to the vote of the town."

In 1828, we find from the Town Records, that there was an endeavor to establish a high school, Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev.

Thomas Russell Sullivan, pastor of the "Keene Congregational (Unitarian) Society," Gen. Justus Perry, Aaron Hall (son of the deceased minister of that name) and Azel Wilder, being a committee on that subject. It was also "voted that the instructor of this school shall not endeavor to inculcate, in school, doctrines peculiar to any one religious sect, nor distribute to his scholars any religious publication." It was agreed that the school might be kept during the first year, seven, and during the second year, eight months," "which," it was urged, "is at least three and four months longer than a school has usually been kept by a master." It appears from minutes kept by the late Dr. Barstow, (secretary) that after two or three months spent in writing to the presidents of Dartmouth, Amherst, Middlebury, and Yale Colleges, Mr. Edward E. Eels, a graduate of Middlebury College, was engaged as high school teacher for two months, at \$25 a month, independent of board. His term expired January 29, 1829. Subsequently, Mr. A. H. Bennett was the instructor for three months, "at \$40 a month, including board." So short-lived was this school.

The next time we hear of a high school, it has leased, in 1853, the Keene Academy building, erected about sixteen years previous, and taken its principal, the efficient William Torrance, with Miss Louisa P. Stone, of Newburyport, as assistant. Mr. Torrance, two years afterwards, died. The purchase of this Academy edifice was afterwards secured by process of law. What would the persons, who, forty-seven years ago, found it so hard to raise \$300 dollars a year for a high school teacher, have said, could they have seen, in vision, our new and spacious high school building, completed this year, at a cost of about \$50,000?

We find that at the "State Common School Convention" at Concord, June 6th, 1843, the meeting was called to order by Hon. Salma Hale, of Keene, and that the committee for Keene were Hon. S. Hale, Rev. A. A. Livermore (who succeeded Rev. T. R. Sullivan, in 1836) and Mr. Isaac Sturtevant. *Mr. Livermore's services to the town in behalf of edu-

*Mr. Livermore was the author of a Commentary upon the Gospels, "Acts," and "Romans;" of a Prize Essay, solicited by the American Peace Society, and a volume of Sermons.

education and temperance were unstinted. He was a man made to be loved. On May 11th, 1843, an address was delivered at the annual meeting of the "Cheshire Common School Association, at Marlboro', by William P. Wheeler, which appears to have been published. Thus early did this lamented advocate, whose loss is so fresh, seek to identify himself with the well-being of the community. Mr. W. S. Briggs has shown me "The Keene Directory for 1831," from which it appears that the number of "scholars" that year was seven hundred and sixty-eight. In 1875, the number was one thousand four hundred and forty-seven.

In 1845, and for a short time previous, a "Teachers' Institute" was established in the county, by private subscription.

On March 12, 1850, Keene votes seventy-five dollars for a "Teachers' Institute," on condition of the co-operation of other towns in the county.

Yet any word, however brief, concerning educational matters in Keene, would be incomplete, which did not chronicle the "School for Young Ladies and Misses," in which, under date of 1817, Miss Fiske and Miss Sprague advertise that they shall "pay all possible attention to the improvement of the manners, morals and minds of their pupils."

On April 11, 1811, at the age of twenty-seven, Miss Catharine Fiske began her school in Keene, which, in May, 1814, under the designation of "The Female Seminary," was conducted for twenty-three years, with signal success, until her death in 1837. Miss Fiske had been engaged in teaching for fifteen years, before coming to Keene. Rev. Dr. Barstow, in an obituary sketch, published in the *Boston Recorder* for September 1st, 1837, estimates that during the thirty-eight years of her service, more than two thousand five hundred pupils came under her care. He commends especially "her tact in eliciting the dormant energies of some minds, and the stimulus afforded to those that were apt to learn." One friend of mine had scarcely set foot in Canada, when a lady said: "So you are from Keene? I was once there myself, at Miss Fiske's school!" Another friend found that she had scarce reached Spain, when she was favored even there, with some reminiscence of Miss Fiske's school. Miss Withington, after-

wards the late Mrs. Stewart Hastings, and Miss Barnes, now Mrs. T. H. Leverett, were among the teachers associated with Miss Fiske in her school. Miss Withington conducted it for a while after Miss Fiske's decease.

The Directory of 1831 records the existence of the Cheshire Athenæum, with six hundred volumes; Joel Parker, president. The "Keene Book Society," which had existed for a number of years previous, reports Rev. T. R. Sullivan, as president, Salmon Hale, and S. Dinsmoor, Jr., as executive committee, George Tilden as treasurer and librarian, J. W. Prentiss as secretary, with two hundred and seventy-five volumes. The "Keene Forensic Society and Lyceum" (Joel Parker president) also greets our eyes on these pages. Ten years later, we find a discussion advertised on the part of the "Keene Lyceum," upon this subject: "Is Great Britain justified in her war against China?" Evidently, without the intervention of a distant "Lecture Bureau," the minds of the residents were not in complete stagnation, while they had a Lyceum and Debating Society, marshalled by such a man as Joel Parker.

Our later "Keene Athenæum" was established in 1859. The "Free Public Library" in which it was merged, and which is supported by an annual grant* from the city, (which name the old town took upon herself in 1874) now numbers about three thousand volumes. Might not steps have been taken still earlier, toward founding such a library, had Keene devoted her share of the famed United States "Surplus Revenue" in a way different from what is indicated, in the following vote?

"Voted," March 8th, 1842, "That the public money of the United States, deposited with the town, by the Act of January 13, 1837, and all interest which has accrued thereon, be divided equally among those persons, being American citizens, who were residents in the town on the first day of January last, and who shall continue to reside therein until the first day of April next, and who shall be taxed in said town for their polls or ratable estate, the current year, and such other persons, being citizens and residents, as aforesaid, as may be over seventy years of age, (paupers excepted) and are thereby exempt from taxes." Seven thousand eight hundred and

* Five hundred dollars in the year 1876.

seven dollars, it appears, was the sum thus jingled into the pockets of the people. The town of Provincetown, Mass., put their share into a plank sidewalk over their drifting sands. They were determined to have *some common benefit* from the money, even although it were not an eminently intellectual one.

How much the "Keene Harmonic Society" and the "Keene Musical Association," chronicled in the Directory of 1831, paved the way for the prosperous annual Musical Conventions with which Keene has been identified for a score of years—who can tell? *

On March 9, 1847, on motion of Hon. Phineas Handerson, a committee was appointed to devise ways and means for building or procuring a town hall. The cost, aside from the tower and "extension," a much later expense, appears, from the committee's report of March 12, 1850, to have been: for land, \$1,750; whole cost, including land, \$15,816.89.

The building erected by the "Cheshire Provident Institution for Savings"† a few years since, is a fine monument to this beneficent enterprise. It is seldom that for more than two score years, a treasurer is spared to witness the extending sweep of such a movement, and even to see a second institution‡ of kindred character. But Mr. George Tilden, who handed their books to the depositors in "the day of small things," now renders the same office to the grand-children of many whose hands have long since crumbled into dust.

The "Natural History Society," organized a few years since, has served to develop a wholesome zeal for the study of nature on the part of our youth, and has held its meetings with marvellous assiduity, and is steadily collecting a museum.

A "Society for the Better Protection of Animals" was organized last year, at the urgent entreaty of the late Mrs. L.

*This 1831 Directory mentions the *Farmers' Museum* newspaper as established in 1828. In addition to the oft quoted *New Hampshire Sentinel*, the *American News*, conducted by the late Benaiah Cook, was in circulation in 1831, when the writer came to Keene, Mr. H. A. Bill was then the editor of the *Cheshire Republican*. The *Sentinel* and the *Republican* have long had sole possession of the field.

† This Bank was chartered in July, 1833, and went into operation in September, with Mr. Tilden as treasurer. Its deposits are now about \$2,000,000.

‡ The "Keene Five Cents Savings Bank," established in 1868. Its deposits now amount to \$714,000. Let posterity understand that we have also, four "National Banks" in Keene.

M. Handerson, our lamented postmistress, and was largely aided in the maturing of its constitution by the late Hon. William P. Wheeler.

On March 14, 1860, the town accepts the one thousand dollar bequest of the late David A. Simmons, of Roxbury, Mass., (a native of Keene) "toward the relief and comfort of such of the poor of the town, requiring assistance therefrom — especially the aged and infirm;" a condition of the bequest being that the selectmen shall keep the same well invested, and distribute only the income.

A residence of a quarter of a century among you, prompts me to say, that I have never known the place for which its residents cherished a greater attachment. How dear these hills and forests and streams are to them!

Rev. Dr. George G. Ingersoll,* (who, in 1850, retired hither for the last thirteen years of his life) in a poem recited at the centennial dinner, in 1853, after we had listened to Hon. Joel Parker's address at the town hall, exemplifies this strong local attachment, in these words:

"The Keene that was, dream of an earlier year,
Its very name was music to my ear.
Like some sweet, far-off, visionary scene,
My very name for Fairy-Land was "Keene."
The Keene that is, pride of Ashuelot vale,
With heart and tongue, I bid thee hail!
Where better seek, where better hope to find,
Rest for the frame, yet not to starve the mind?
In this sweet spot where Nature does her part
To meet the earnest cravings of the heart,
With friends and books and blessed memories, —
One night, with Heaven's blessings, look for peace,
Beneath our hills which rise on either side,
By sparkling streams, which through our valley glide."

A most interesting feature in the life of Keene, has been the semi-annual terms of the Court. From the lips of Judges no longer living, I have rejoiced to hear the testimony, that the manners of our court room, the professional courtesies of the members of the bar, one toward another, were in refresh-

* He was the only son of Major George Ingersoll, Commander at West Point, N. Y., from 1796 to 1801. Major Ingersoll died six weeks after retiring to Keene in 1805, when his son George was but eight years old.

ing contrast to what might be witnessed here and there in other quarters of the State. May the same spirit go into the new century! Keene has furnished six members of Congress, all from this profession; Peleg Sprague, Samuel Dinsmoor, Senior, Joseph Buffum, Salma Hale, James Wilson, Jr., and Thomas MacKay Edwards.

Samuel Dinsmoor, and his son Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., have been the only Governors elected from Keene: Levi Chamberlain of the Cheshire bar, being at one time the opposing candidate, of the latter. Mr. Chamberlain, well knowing that in Keene the men of his own political stripe preponderated, playfully suggested, with his characteristic mirth, that to avoid putting the State to so much trouble, Mr. Dinsmoor and he had best "leave the case out" to the decision of the friends and neighbors by whom they were best known!

It was a memorable scene, when in the sunlight of the afternoon of May 20th, 1861, the late Ex-Governor Dinsmoor stood upon the platform erected for the occasion, on Central Square, and, in presence of a multitude, said, as he introduced to them Hon. James Wilson, still happily spared to us, (both decorated with the red, white and blue :) "Amid the general gloom which pervades the community, there is, yet, one cause for congratulation,—that we at last see a united North." Representing differing political organizations, these honored men served to typify the patriotism, which, in that trying hour, fused so many hearts in one. How the women, moved with a common purpose, toiled week after week, year after year, in connection with the "Soldier's Aid Society," or to help the benevolent work of the United States Sanitary Commission! * How like romance sound some of the surprises caused by the handiwork of the New Hampshire women. † A Dublin soldier-boy, in his distant hospital, gains strength to scan the names inscribed upon his album-quilt, and is strangely stirred, as the

* So early as March 11, 1862, the town votes three thousand dollars for the relief of wives, children, or parents of volunteers.

† After the subsidence of the war, five hundred dollars a year were paid by a combination of persons in the various religious societies, for two or three years, to the "Keene Freedman's Aid Society." The "Ladies' Charitable Society" unites as it has for many years, the sympathies of all the parishes. The "Invalids' Home" has been lately founded chiefly by the efforts of the "Keene Congregational" (or Unitarian) Society; its chief benefactor being the late Charles Wilson, who left to the Home the sum of one thousand dollars.

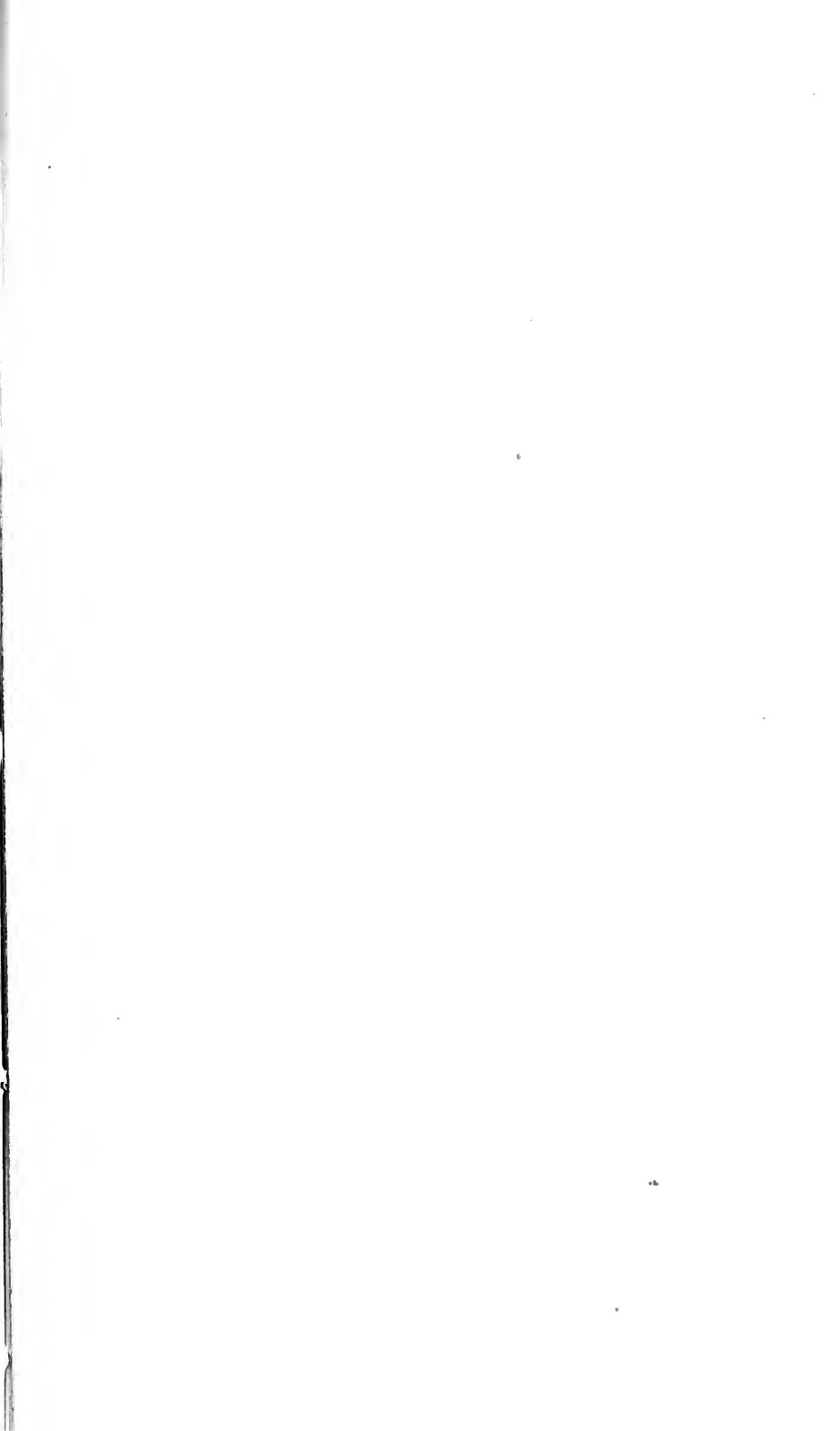
names grow more and more familiar, until at last he sees the hand-writing of his own mother.

As we recall those memorable days, how that company of the Second Regiment, moving forth from our railroad station, at the signal of prayer, comes back to our minds, and those tents of the New Hampshire Sixth, as for weeks together, they whitened the plains beyond the Ashuelot! How shall I speak of the courage, the patience, the devotion of such men? I abandon the attempt. In summer and winter, week in and week out, they have their perpetual orator. There he stands in brazen panoply of armor! If you have never heeded him, you will not heed me! But in his meditative attitude, to me he speaks, not wholly of the storm-cloud of battle, nor of freedom dawning upon millions of a once enslaved race; he seems to dream besides, of brighter days for his country, days when "men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The time shall come when no living tongue among their comrades shall be left to tell of Lane and Leverett, of Metcalf and Flint, Crossfield and Rugg, and Howard and Cheney, and their associates, who returned, not alive, to the dear old home! One by one, all who bore part in the gigantic contest shall have passed onward. Yet even then, God grant that those silent lips may speak eloquently to the future dwellers in this happy valley, of those sons of Keene, who in behalf of their country presented "their bodies a living sacrifice."

Ye living hosts of the departed, gathered invisibly with us to-day, ye who ploughed these stubborn furrows in years gone by, ye, who watched for the midnight war-whoop, ye, who in later days, were summoned to the field by the Revolutionary tocsin, or who flew to your Country's defence in the War of the Rebellion, pray that we may enter upon the new century determined to hold all who fill offices of honor and trust in the nation, to a rigid accountability, yet at the same time cherish fresh faith in the expanding destinies of the Republic! And ye, an unseen host, who are coming after, ye, who, a hundred years from to-day, beguiled by *your* earth-dream, shall call us all, "dead," we beg you not to forget us wholly,

as you, in your turn, gather here! Here's a warm hand for you across the arches of the coming century! We pledge ourselves, God willing, to be with you then, though your "eyes" should be "holden" that you shall "not know" us! Remember how dear this valley was to us! It can be no dearer to you! Carry education, temperance, literature, religion, to a higher, purer pitch than we have! And say "Amen," as we do, to these time-honored words of Sir Wm. Jones, which we leave with you as our benediction:

"What constitutes a State?
 Not high-raised battlement or labour'd mound,
 Thick wall or moated gate;
 Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crown'd;
 Not bays and broad arm'd ports,
 Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
 Not starr'd and spangled courts
 Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
 No:—Men, high minded men,
 With powers as far above dull brutes endued
 In forest, brake or den,
 As beasts excel co'd rocks and brambles rude;—
 Men who their duties know,
 But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain,
 Prevent the long-aim'd blow
 And crush the tyrant, while they rend the chain;—
 These constitute a State!"





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 996 902 9